



News Release

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Flu vaccine: Do it for you, do it for your family

New public service ad encourages yearly flu vaccine

OLYMPIA — Flu activity has been low in Washington in the early part of this season, so there's still time to get vaccinated before illnesses start to mount. It's vital to get immunized well before disease increases in the community because it takes two weeks for vaccine to be effective.

The Department of Health is introducing a new public service video this week reminding people to get a yearly flu shot to help protect against serious illness. The video features local families along with Secretary of Health Mary Selecky talking about why they get the flu shot every year and encouraging others to do the same. The video is on the [agency's website](http://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov) and the [agency's YouTube page](http://www.youtube.com/user/WADepartmentofHealth) (www.youtube.com/user/WADepartmentofHealth). Free ringtones of the state's [WashYourHandsingTon jingle](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ringtone) (www.doh.wa.gov/ringtone) promoting flu prevention are also online.

The video is a good reminder that now is the time to get vaccinated before flu begins to circulate. The flu vaccine is recommended for everyone six months and older. Everyone needs to get a flu shot this season even if you got vaccinated last year because immunity decreases over time. It's also important to be vaccinated every year since flu viruses can change.

"Influenza is a serious disease that hits some people harder than others and can be fatal," says Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. "The flu vaccine is one of the best ways to protect against the flu and has a long safety record. It protects you, your loved ones, and your community. It's also important to use good health habits—washing your hands, covering your cough, and staying home when you're sick."

Flu can make anyone sick but vaccination is especially important for certain high-risk groups including pregnant women, children under five, people 50 and older, and those with certain medical conditions, like asthma, heart disease, diabetes, and neurologic conditions.

Children under nine may need two doses. Check with your doctor, nurse, or clinic about how many doses your child may need this season.

To find flu vaccine, contact your [local health agency](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm) (www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm), doctor, local pharmacy, or call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588. More information and resources are on the agency's [Flu News web page](http://www.doh.wa.gov/flunews) (www.doh.wa.gov/flunews).

The Department of Health provides flu vaccine to all kids under 19 at no cost. Health care providers may charge an office visit fee and a fee to give the vaccine, called an administration fee. People who cannot afford the administration fee can ask their regular health care provider to waive the cost. Adults should talk to their insurance carriers about coverage for flu vaccine.

The [Department of Health website](http://www.doh.wa.gov) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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Editor's note: sound cuts from Secretary Selecky about flu and the importance of getting a flu shot are on the agency's website .
